

THE NEW CHIEF OF POLICE

PROPERTY OF JOHNNIE SPEER.

THE NEW CHIEF

CAST

CHEIF SAUNDERS THE NEW CHIEF
DUFFIE, the cop COMEDY
JOE MASTERS A SAILOR
MRS. DWITT BEECHER PRES. OF THE FEDERAL CLUB.
DORA LAFEAR SOCIETY FLAPPER TYPE

SCENE PLOT

A very elaborate office set for Chief. Desk C. Two chairs R. Two chairs L. Exits are R. and L. Telephone on Chief's desk. Any other officefurniture to dress stage.

CHIEF

(DISCOVERED AT RISE. PHONE BELL RINGS) Hello. Who? Mrs. Dewitt Beacher of the women's Federal club, send her up. (HANGS UP RECIEVER)

DUFFY

(ENTER R. DRESSED AS BURLESQUE COP) Hello, Chief.

CHIEF

Good morning, Duffy, Go get that sailor out of the bull pen and have him ready when I ring.

DUFFY

Ay ay, your honor, the bull pen or bust. (EXIT L.)

MRS D.

(ENTER R. VERY WELL DRESSED AND TALKS VERY GRAND DAME. SLIGHTLY GRAY HAIR) Good morning, Chief, Saunders.

CHIEF

Good morning, Mrs. Dewitt Beecher, won't you be seated. (MOTIONS TO CHAIR)

MRS D.

(SITS) I called to officiate in my official capacity as president of the woman's Federal Clubs, to discuss the latest outrage on one of our young girls.

CHIEF

You mean you wish to discuss the matter about the sailor speaking to Miss La Fear as she was going home from a party?

MRS D.

Yes, as the man has been arrested, he must be punished. The idea, of a man, a stranger, stopping a lady on the street and saying "Hello Kiddo" to her.

CHIEF

That seems to be the only charge against this sailor, doestn't it? Speaking to her it ended there, didn't it?

MRS. D.

I should say not, see here Chief we women in this city have a great deal to do with the election of officers that have appointed you as chief, and we are taking an active interest in the enforcement of the law.

CHIEF

Yes, I am very sorry to say the women of this town are very active in politics.

MRS D.

We have noticed with a great deal of alarm since we have closed the red light district. That respectable women and girls are being insulted on the streets almost hourly and we demand that immediate steps be taken to suppress it.

CHIEF

By whom?

MRS. D.

By the police department of course.

CHIEF

May the police department depend upon the co-operation of the Women's Federal Clubs?

MRS. D.

Most certainly. Why do you ask?

CHIEF

Because in the past the women of this city have failed to give us any support. They have dealt with the effect alone and not the cause.

MRS. D.

Why, Chief, how dare you make such a statement. We women have fought vice for years. We have closed every disreputable house in the city. We have driven these unspeakable women out. (PAUSE)

CHIEF

Yes, you have driven these unspeakable women out. (PAUSE) Pray, don't hesitate, Mrs. Dewitt Beecher, but where have you driven them to? You have driven them from the restricted district and scattered them all over the city among the decent people.

MRS. D.

Well, we have closed them and it is up to the police department to see that they are closed. A trading post with a population of one hundred thousand without out a red light district is some record.

CHIEF

Yes, a record of inefficiency and a monument of ignorance.

MRS. D.

(RISES) Chief Saunders.

CHIEF

Since you women have been given a vote you have taken it upon yourselves the settlement of problems that don't understand. You have fought vice, yes---in and out of season. You have clamored for its suppression but through ignorance willfully or otherwise but you have never raised a finger to remove its cause!

MRS. D.

That is not a fact.

CHIEF

Pardon me but I speak the truth. You women have not only lowered yourselves to a low state of morals but you have refused to aid the victims.

MRS. D.

I protest in the name of the good womanhood of this state, I protest!

CHIEF

I will show you what I mean in case you have come to me about it. I will prove to you that the women of this city, the good women, the mothers of grown up daughters, are partly responsible for the conditions of which they complain of.

MRS. D.

How dare you make such a statement? It is a reflection on this young lady who was so grossly insulted.

CHIEF

I mean it to be.

MRS. D.

She comes from one of our best families and her character is above reproach.

CHIEF

No doubt, but that sailor did not know that.

MRS. D.

She was dressed in the height of fashion. Couldn't he tell from her appearance that she was a lady?

CHIEF

No!

MRS. D.

Chief Saunders.

CHIEF

It is true that this man has been in every port in the world. His acquaintance with women has been restricted to a certain class. He has no means of judging them except by their appearance. And this young lady, whose character you claim is above reproach, if her clothes had not suggested a woman of the underworld, she would have never been insulted.

MRS. D.

You forget yourself, Chief Saunders! (RISES) I will not listen to your insults to the good women of this city any longer. (STARTS)

CHIEF

Wait! You must stay, Madam. You cannot escape your responsibilities.

MRS. D.

Would you detain me here by force?

CHIEF

If necessary.

MRS. D.

(SITS) You shall hear of this later, Chief Saunders.

CHIEF

I am responsible for my actions, Madam. (CALLS) Duffy, send up that sailor.

DUFFY

(OFF STAGE) Ay, ay? sir!

MRS. D.

I will not remain in the same room with that beast!

CHIEF

Don't worry, madam. He will probably be just as uncomfortable in your society as you are in his.

DUFFY

Right this way, little one, the cheese wants to see you. (SITS AND GOES TO SLEEP)

JOE.

(ENTERS AND STANDS L. OF DESK)

CHIEF

What is your name?

JOE

Joe Masters.

CHIEF

What is your occupation?

JOE

Sailor able sea man, and member and mate to the air craft. We flew here from Galveston where we had just landed from a whaling cruise.

CHIEF

Married or single?

JOE

Single.

CHIEF

When did you hit town?

JOE

A week ago.

CHIEF

How long were you at sea?

JOE

Eight months.

CHIEF

And during that eight months you remained aboard your ship?

JOE

Yes sir, except when we were camped in the rice fields.

CHIEF

When you landed here, where is the first place you headed for?

JOE

The dance halls.

CHIEF

And why did you make for the dance halls?

JOE

Well, Chief, when we landed in Galveston before I had stepped on land I was given orders to make ready to fly here with the mate and being a stranger naturally I went to the dance halls that's the only place a sailor can have any fun.

CHIEF

Didn't you know that the Y. M. C. A. had a reading room for sailors?

JOE

Yes, but the men that go to the Arctic hunting fens aint that kind of sailors. A man from an eight months cruise in the Arctics wants company. For over six months I didn't see a white woman. And when I landed here, I was given leave of absence, and I wanted to be free and be among those that made me feel that I was welcome.

CHIEF

Go on!

JOE

Well, when I came down the line, I found all the old dance halls closed up. No lights, no dancing, no women, and nothing to drink but grape juice.

CHIEF

Go on!

JOE

I asked the cop what had struck the town and where I could go to have a good time. He said there was no place in town for a bum like me, and if I wanted to have any fun I would have to wear a Claw Hammer suit, join a fancy club and stop at a swell hotel.

CHIEF

Well, go on!

JOE

I thought he was kidding at first until he told me that a bunch of fool women were trying to make a Sunday school out of a one time good town. Then I asked him where---where---

CHIEF

Where the red light district was.

JOE

Yes sir.

CHIEF

And what did he say?

JOE

He said it was spread all over the city.

CHIEF

What did you do then?

JOE

I started up town and---and---

CHIEF

Go on!

JOE

I was crazy for somone to talk to. And when I saw a girl coming down the street that looked like a dance hall girl, I stopped her.

MRS. D.

(RISES. VERY SOCIETY LIKE) A dance hall girl this is an outrage!

DUFFY

(JUMPS UP. LOOKS OFF) Who's out of the cage?

CHIEF

Duffy, sit down.

DUFFY

Ahy! Ay! (SALUTE. BUS. THEN SITS AND GOES TO SLEEP)

CHIEF

(LOOKS AT DUFFY TURN TO MRS. D.) It is the truth, Madam. (TO JOE) What made you think she was a dance hall girl?

JOE

By the way she looked. She didn't have much on. And what she did have on fit her like a wet bathing suit, and I could see through to her knee.

CHIEF

And didn't you think you were doing wrong in speaking to her?

JOE

No sir. I thought that she was dressed that way to let men know that she was a sporting woman.

CHIEF

What did you say to her?

JOE

I just said "Hello, Kiddo!"

CHIEF

Would you have spoken to her if you had known that she was not a sporting woman?

JOE

No sir.

CHIEF

And why not?

JOE

Well, because I have got a dear old mother and sister too, but they don't dress like she did.

CHIEF

That will do. You can step into the next room.

JOE

Chief, I aint the kind of a man to insult a good woman, and I don't want youto think that I am doing the baby act. If I am wrong, I'll take what is coming to me. But if that girl had a looked like a lady, I would have treated her as such. (EXIT)

CHIEF

In that statement lies the root of this trouble.

MRS. D.

Do you believe him?

CHIEF

(Climax Speech) Yes, my experience as a policeman, is that a good woman has less to fear from a rough neet than she has from some of these so called gentlemen about the city

DUFFY

Hurrah for the Irish!

CHIEF

Duffy!

DUFFY

(SALUTES AND GOES TO SLEEP AGAIN)

MRS. D.

But this girl gave him absolutely no encouragement to address her, we know her. She is a lady. And we demand that an example be made of this man.

CHIEF

He should be punished because he is human, eh? But what about the girl? I have made a personal investiagtion of this affair, and I know the facts.

MRS. D.

And with what results?

CHIEF

You shall see. Duffy! (NO ANSWER. HITS DUFFY WITH PAPER)

DUFFY

(JUMPS UP) Sure. I'll have a cup of coffee. Ay! Ay! (SALUTES)

CHIEF

Send in Miss LaFear.

MRS. D.

(ASTONISHED) Is she here?

CHIEF

Yes, and I requested her to wear the costume that she wore when this man insulted her.

MRS. D.

Surely you do not intend to question her on such a delicate subject?

CHIEF

I am going to question her about her costume, and her habits. And if both are above reproach, her sensibilities will not be outraged.

DUFFY

(ENTER WITH MISS LAFEAR)

MISS L.

(X TO MRS D. VERY MUCH SOCIETY) Oh, Mrs. Beecher, isn't this terrible?

MRS D.

There there, dear! We women must make sacrifices for the good cause. The best people in town are with you, and they believe in you.

MISS L.

I was never so mortified in all my life. Just imagine me being in a police station!

DUFFY

Hells fire! That aint nothing. Look at me; I work here.

CHIEF

Duffy!

DUFFY

(SAME BUS. GOES TO SLEEP) Ay! Ay! Ay!

MRS. D.

There there, dear, control yourself. The chief wishes to ask you a few questions.

MISS L.

(X TO CHIEF L. OF DESK) Oh isn't it terrible, chief, that a lady can't walk down the street without being insulted.

CHIEF

Where did you spend most of your time yesterday afternoon?

MISS L.

With Miss Allison at her hotel.

CHIEF

Do you live there?

MISS L.

No, I live at home.

CHIEF

Did you go to the hotel alone?

MISS L.

Yes sir.

CHIEF

Why did you go there?

MISS L.

Miss Allison gave a bridge party.

CHIEF

Did you play bridge for money?

MISS L.

Why of course!

CHIEF.

Then according to the laws of this city, it is my duty to arrest you as a common gambler.

DUFFY

(JUMPS UP) Come on. You're pinched! (STARTS FOR HER)

MRS. D.

No no no no no, a thousand times no!

DUFFY

Oh for goodness sakes!

CHIEF

Duffy!

DUFFY

AY ay! Chief. (SALUTE BUS.)

MRS. D.

Miss Allison is a lady of society; in fact, all the ladies who play bridge are prominent society women.

CHIEF

Then according to your way of thinking, gambling doesn't apply to society women?

MRS. D.

No, no, Chief, I don't mean that, but you see, bridge is a society woman's recreation.

CHIEF

The same as crap shooting is a bum's recreation!

DUFFY

And that's what's wrong with the damnation!

CHIEF

Duffy!

DUFFY

Ay! Ay! (SALUTES AND GOES TO SLEEP)

CHIEF

Well, we'll just let that pass for a moment. Were there any refreshments served?

MISS L.

Why we---really---why certainly!

CHIEF

And why did they consist of?

MISS L.

Why---er--the usual thing.

CHIEF

Miss LaFear, I want to know the truth. What did those refreshments consist of?

MISS L.

Well, er---cocktails---and high balls.

CHIEF

How many cocktails and high balls did you drink?

MISS L.

Well, really, Chief, I---

CHIEF

Answer me!

MISS L.

Oh not more than four, possibly five.

CHIEF

Did you feel the effects of what you drank?

MISS L.

Oh dear me no!

DUFFY

(TO HER WITH PENCIL AND PAPER) Young lady, what's your address?

CHIEF

Duffy!

DUFFY

Ay! Ay! (SALUTES AND SITS)

CHIEF

So you didn't feel the effects?

MRS. D.

Chief Saunders, those were ladies there, and they hold their refreshments like ladies.

CHIEF

That doesn't alter the fact that this girl had been drinking.

MISS. L.

Why the idea!

DUFFY

Good idea but a bad habit.

CHIEF

Duffy!

DUFFY

Ay!, Ay! (SALUTES AND SITS)

CHIEF

Did any of the ladies smoke cigarettes?

MISS L.

Why, Chief Saunders.

CHIEF

Answer me!

MISS L.

Yes sir, but that is the fashion now. All of the girls in my set smoke cigarettes.

CHIEF

So do all the sporting women! How ever we'll let that pass. Then according to your own statement, on the afternoon in question, you gambled drank whiskey and smoked cigarettes.

MISS L.

Why, Chief, how crudely you express it.

DUFFY

Yes, you should have sent it by freight.

CHIEF

Duffy!

DUFFY

(SAME BUS.)

CHIEF

I do say it rather abruptly. But you must remember that I am not a society man. I am only a policeman. Who chooses your gowns, Miss LaFear?

MISS D.

I do, of course.

CHIEF

And you gave orders that it was to be made skin tight?

MISS L.

Why certainly. Its the style.

CHIEF

And does your mother approve of the way you dress?

MISS L.

Certainly.

CHIEF

Do you think that you dress as a modern and refined woman should?

MISS L.

Certainly!

CHIEF

Well you don't! There isn't a line of your figure that isn't in plain view. There's nothing left to the imagination. And your whole appearance is an appeal to the base passion of men. You paint your face, you gamble, drink whiskey, smoke cigarettes, and then call yourself a lady. If you and your kind represent the best womanhood of America; the nation, then God help the star American stars and stripes!

MISS L

Do you know to whom you are speaking?

CHIEF

Quite well! I am speaking a girl whose grandfather came across the plains with nothing but the clothes that he had on his back, and courage in his heart. Whose grandmother shared the privations of pioneer days. Two real Americans they were! I am speaking to a girl who is plebian to the core. Who spends the money that her grandfather grubbed from the earth, spends it over a gambling table! A girl whom a man cannot distinguish from a fallen woman. A girl who seeks protection from the police to save her own immorality!

MRS. D.

Chief Saunders, I'll have your star for this. We will petition for your resignation at once. Yes the real reformers of the city.

CHIEF

You mean the real agitators! A small minority whose voice is more often

9

heard in a public place than it is in her own home. The real reformers finds her work at the cradle, not at the restrom.

MRS. D.

Chief Saunders, you are not doing your duty to this city.

CHIEF

That's true. If I did my duty, I would arrest the proprietors of the swæl hotels that permit gambling in defiance of the law. I would arrest the society bridge parties. I would raid your social functions, whose dances shame the barbary coast from which they came. If I did my duty, you so called meddling reformers would be the first to appear in the criminal courts.

DUFFY

Hurrah for the Irish!

CHIEF

Duffy!

DUFFY

(SAME BUS)

MRS. D.

It is plain to be seen that your sympathy lies with the beast that insults women as they go down the street, if you had your way, he would be allowed to go free.

CHIEF

He will go free for that girl will not appear to prosecute him.

MRS. D.

And I say she shall. She must!

CHIEF

If she does, the moment she comes off of the witness stand, I will arrest her as a common gambler.

MISS L.

(X TO MRS. D.) Oh, Mrs. Beecher, that would terrible. He must not do it.

MRS. D.

Calm yourself, dear. He cannot prove it.

MISS L.

Oh, Chief, don't. The disgrace would be terrible.

CHIEF

You mean the publicity. The disgrace is in being found out.

MISS L.

But, Chief, I didn't think I was doing wrong. All the girls in my set do the same thing. I will apologize, I will---I---

MRS. D.

If you'll take my advice, you'll do nothing of the sort.

CHIEF

Youradvice, Madam! (POINTS TO MISS L.) There stands a living example of your advice. An opportunity neglected for the glare of the public asylum, and yet you declare yourself competent to direct the affairs of this city.

MRS. D.

How dare you sir!

CHIEF

Look at her again and then ask me why I say she is spoiled by riches that she did not earn. She plays cards for money, a gambler, she drinks whiskey as a matter of course, a perpetual drunkard. She smokes cigarettes which weaken her mentally. Her body is decorated so as to excite the basest passion of man. Is that a sample of what your teaching has done for the individual? What can you do for the nation? Go back home and teach your children the simple virtue. And remember before you try to lay down the moral laws of this city that reform, like charity, begins at home!

DUFFY

(RISES. SHAKES CHIEF'S HANDS) Chief, you have done a damn good days work.

CURTAIN.